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ABSTRACT

This guide presents strategies and worksheets for helping students in grades 4 through 12 learn about the important contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to the achievement of civil rights. The guide is presented in two parallel parts, the first for the elementary and the second for the secondary grades, and both parts are divided into seven strategies, each developing a separate theme. The suggested lessons and activities are intended to help students be able to: (1) describe the political and social situation of black Americans during the first part of the twentieth century; (2) analyze the influence of childhood experiences on Dr. King's ideas and feelings; (3) explain Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolent resistance; (4) evaluate nonviolence as a method for winning change; (5) recognize the many facets of Dr. King's concern and involvement; and (6) assess the contribution of Dr. King to history. The guide includes photographs, poems, historical background, and other materials as part of the curriculum plan. (KH)

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## A Guide to Celebrating

# Martin Luther King Jr. Day

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# Foreword

"Whom do you consider a hero today?" a teacher asks the class. They do not respond. It is apparent that both students and the society at large are finding it increasingly difficult to identify appropriate heroes. Fatal gunshots in the 1960s eliminated many heroes from the American scene. None was more deserving of accolades than Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a unique person. In a time of extreme polarization, Dr. King's coalition included people of all races and ages. When confronted with virulent hatred, he responded with a call for greater love. The more difficult the challenge, the more determined he was to meet it. He spoke his mind with an oratorical style that could quickly move his audience to an emotional zenith. Although some disagreed with his message, none could resist being moved by it.

Memories are short lived. Most of our present students never saw Dr. King when he was alive. We have prepared this curriculum not only to commemorate his life, but also to offer the classroom teacher a guide to activities which give meaning to his memory.

Charlotte Frank

Charlotte Frank
Executive Director,
Division of Curriculum and Instruction

# Acknowledgments

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# *Introduction*

I remember a trip to a downtown shoestore with father when I was still small. We sat down in the first empty seats at the front of the store. A young white clerk came up and murmured politely:

"I'll be happy to wait on you if you'll just move to those seats in the rear." My father answered, "There's nothing wrong with these seats. We're quite comfortable here."

"Sorry," said the clerk, "but you'll have to move."

"We'll either buy shoes sitting here," my father retorted, "or we won't buy shoes at all." Whereupon he took me by the hand and walked out of the store. This was the first time I had ever seen my father so angry. I still remember walking down the street beside him as he muttered, "I don't care how long I have to live with this system, I will never accept it."

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

It is obvious that the son shared his father's determination to resist oppression. From the time he led the Montgomery bus boycott until his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. played an important role, not only in the United States civil rights movement but in the cause of freedom around the world.

Like all great people, Dr. King was endowed with unique abilities. Not only was he gifted with superior intelligence but also with the charisma necessary for leadership. At Morehouse College (Atlanta) he was a sociology major, an orator and member of the choir. Later he became a Baptist minister. In 1954, he was awarded a Ph.D. degree from Boston University.

What makes Dr. King's contributions to humankind so significant is his appeal to the conscience--a person's will to do right. Dr. King believed that there was more strength in nonviolence than violence and that love could conquer hate.

While some people questioned Dr. King's nonviolent tactics, no one questioned his commitment. Certainly, few would disagree that Dr. King shook the conscience of America with a message that will not soon be forgotten.

# *Performance Objectives*

The strategies and worksheets in this guide have been developed to help students learn about the important contributions Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made to the achievement of civil rights for all Americans. By participating in the activities in this guide, students will be able to:

- Describe the political and social situation of Black Americans during the first part of the twentieth century.
- Analyze the influence of childhood experiences on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ideas and feelings.
- Explain Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolent resistance.
- Evaluate nonviolence as a method for winning change.
- Recognize the many facets of Dr. King's concern and involvement.
- Assess the contribution of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the history of humankind.

## *Strategies and Worksheets*

*Strategy 1*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to prominence at a time (the 1950s) when social progress for Blacks in America was painfully slow. Southern Blacks faced a segregated and often unsympathetic society where basic rights were often denied. Legal sanction had been given to segregation when the Supreme Court ruled in Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896) that "separate but equal" public accommodation laws were constitutional. This decision was reversed when the Court ruled in Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) that separate public schools by their nature could not be equal. Despite major obstacles to full equality, many Black Americans looked to the future with hope.

INTRODUCTION

Ask students how they would feel if their teacher favored the blue-eyed over the brown-eyed students. How would they feel if the teacher gave brown-eyed students more homework, lower grades, and punishment assignments? How would they feel if the teacher refused to call on brown-eyed students in class and refused to let them play games during recess? Is it right to separate people, favoring one group over another, just because of some trait (like eye color) that has nothing to do with their abilities? Explain.

NOTE: Teachers are cautioned to keep this "motivation" hypothetical in order to avoid the distress that some children might feel if, as the "brown-eyed" students, they are discriminated against.

DEVELOPMENT

. Distribute Worksheet 1A, "Separate But Equal?". Inform students that they are going to look at pictures that show how people were separated in the South in the early twentieth century because of their skin color. Have students read, examine the photographs and explain their answers to the following questions:

- What do you see in each photograph?

- What does "Colored Entrance" mean? Why do you think there were separate entrances for Black and white people?

- How is the drinking fountain for "coloreds" different from the fountain for whites?

- The situation shown in the photographs is called segregation. How would you define segregation?

- How do the photographs make you feel? Explain. How would you feel if you had to use a separate entrance or drink from a separate water fountain because of your skin color?

- How would you feel if the entrance you had to use was in the back of the theater or the water fountain you had to drink from was not as clean as the one used by the other group?

- Why do you think conditions like those in the photographs existed in the United States?

- What might Black people and other concerned people have done during the first part of this century to change the situation shown in the pictures? What methods would have worked best? Explain.

. Distribute Worksheet 1B, "A Poet's View of 'Separate But Equal.'" Inform students this poem was written by Langston Hughes, one of the foremost Black poets of the 20th century. Read the poem aloud to the class as students follow along. A second reading of the poem may be necessary. Have students complete the exercise on the worksheet. Review their responses and then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

- Who is this poem about? How do you know? What does the poet really mean when he says "They send me to eat in the kitchen"?

- What does the poet say about the situation of Black Americans during the early part of this century? Explain.

- To illustrate the situation he describes, could the poet use the pictures on Worksheet 1A? Explain.

- The poet says, "Tomorrow, I'll be at the table when company comes...." What does he mean? Explain.

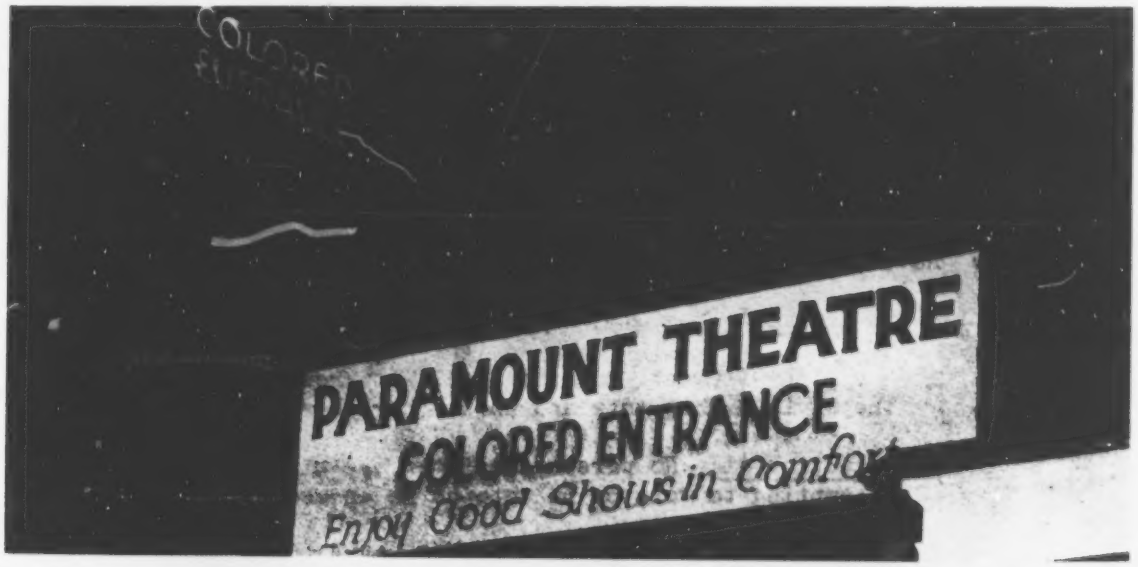
- Do you think this "tomorrow" has come for Black people? Explain your answer.

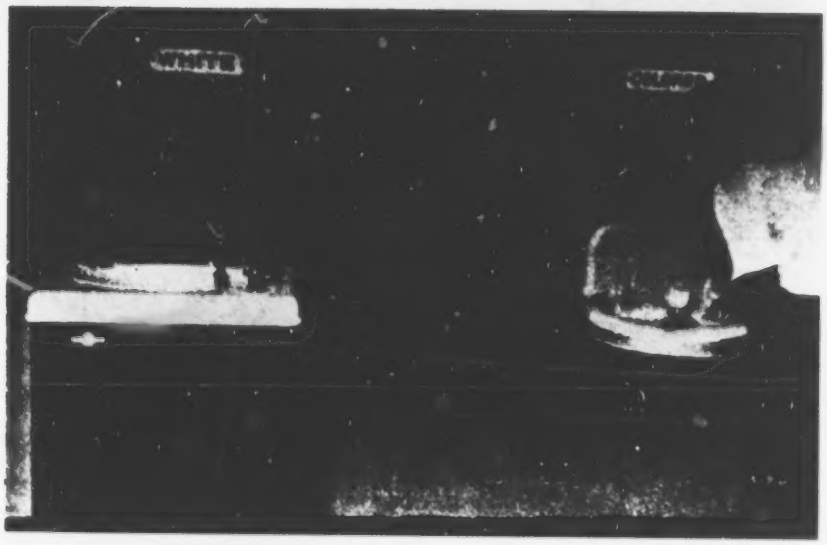
. Students might be asked to research and report on additional specific examples of segregation, as well as racial discrimination, in the United States during the first part of the twentieth century. Have students examine the areas of voting, housing, jobs and education.

A bulletin board showing the situation of American Blacks prior to Dr. King's entrance upon the national scene and the changes that occurred through Dr. King's efforts might be prepared. Photographs, student drawings, excerpts from Dr. King's speeches, student essays and poems might be included in the display.

## *Separate But Equal?*

The photographs below show the situation of Black people in the South in the 1950s. This was about the time that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. began what would be his life's work. The situation shown here, called segregation, had been ruled legal in 1896 by the United States Supreme Court. To the Court, segregating people did not mean that they were being treated unequally. In truth, the theaters, schools, fountains, restaurants, trains, etc. meant for Black people were almost always not as good as those meant for whites.



# *A Poet's View of "Separate But Equal"*

The poem below, although written in the 1920s, voices the feelings of many Black Americans in the 1950s about their situation.

I, TOO,
SING AMERICA

by Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes.
But I laugh.
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed --

I, too, am America.

Arnold Adolf, ed., *I Am The Darker Brother,* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968) p. 75.

EXERCISE

Base your answers to the following questions on the above poem.

1. In this poem, who is the "I" (the speaker)? _____

_____

2. For whom does "the darker brother" stand? _____

_____

3. Who are "they"?

_____

4. Why do "they" send "the darker brother" to eat in the kitchen when company comes?

_____

5. Tomorrow, what will happen to "the darker brother" when company comes?

_____

6. Why does "the darker brother" think he will be treated differently tomorrow?

_____

7. What does the speaker mean when he says, "I, too, am America"?

_____

8. What is the poet's message? _____

_____

*Strategy 2*

Growing up in the Jim Crow South, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. directly experienced the laws and customs which were designed to keep Blacks "in their place." To experience segregation, however, was not to accept it. An examination of Dr. King's early life reveals the role played by his family in shaping his determination to resist that dehumanizing system.

INTRODUCTION

Have students consider the ways in which their feelings and ideas about other people have been influenced by their parents. Why do parents have such a big influence on the ideas of their children? Were your parents influenced by their parents? Is it good that parents have such an impact on the ideas and feelings of their children?

DEVELOPMENT

. Distribute Worksheet 2, "Dr. King's Early Years." Inform students they are going to read a passage which will show how Dr. King, Jr.'s father influenced his life. Have students examine the picture, read and complete the exercise on the worksheet. Have students explain their answers to the following questions:

- What story does this "magazine" tell about the early life of Martin Luther King, Jr.?

- What personal experiences did Martin Luther King, Jr. have with segregation? Explain.

- Why do you think Martin Luther King, Jr.'s father would not use the city buses in Atlanta? What does this show about Martin Luther King, Jr.'s father? Explain.

- What does the shoestore incident tell us about the father of Martin Luther King, Jr.? How do you suppose the young Martin was affected by the shoestore incident? If you were in the same situation, how would you have been affected? Explain.

- Are grown-ups products of their childhood experiences? Have your very early experiences influenced your ideas and feelings? Explain.

. Have students research and report on additional anecdotes about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s early experiences with segregation. Most biographies of Dr. King include several such anecdotes.

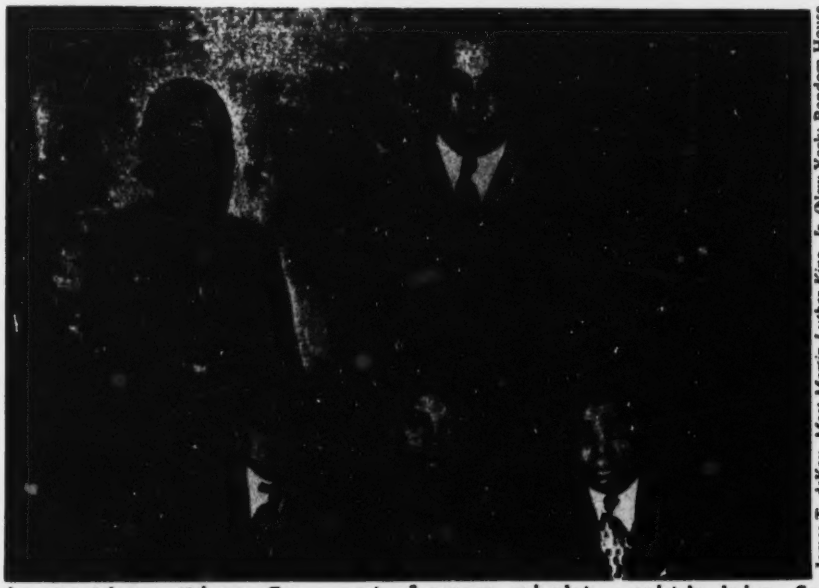
## *Martin's Early Years*

Today many magazines give attention to personalities in the news. If such a magazine included an article on the early life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it might have looked like this:

# Newspeople Magazine

### Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Early Years

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929. Young Martin's father and grandfather were ministers. They had made the Ebenezer Baptist Church one of the best known in the South. The Kings lived in a large, comfortable house near the church. They had nice clothes and plenty to eat. But Martin grew up knowing that many people in Atlanta were too poor to have these things.



James T. deKay, *Meet Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 6.

Martin Luther King,Jr., at lower right, with his family

What was it like to grow up in Atlanta? This was a city that used law and custom to keep the Negro "in his place." Martin Luther King, Jr. went to a segregated school--a school only for Black children. Martin's mother told him that the laws keeping Black and white people apart were bad laws. Martin's father hated these laws. He tried very hard to fight segregation. He would not ride segregated buses. He kept away from segregated stores.

Martin would always remember a trip to a downtown shoestore with his father:

> We sat down in the first empty seats at the front of the store. A young white clerk came up and said politely:
>
> "I'll be happy to wait on you if you'll just move to those seats in the back."
>
> My father answered, "There's nothing wrong with these seats. We're quite comfortable here."
>
> "Sorry," said the clerk, "but you'll have to move."
>
> "We'll either buy shoes sitting here," my father answered, "or we won't buy shoes at all." Whereupon he took me by the hand and walked out of the store. This was the first time I had ever seen my father so angry. I still remember walking down the street beside him as he said, "I don't care how long I have to live with this system, I will never accept it."

EXERCISE

Sometimes, conclusions can be drawn from the information in a reading selection, even though these conclusions are not directly stated in the reading. Which of the following conclusions can be validly (logically) drawn from the "magazine article"? Write "yes" next to the conclusions which are validly drawn and "no" next to those which are not valid.

1. _____ Religion played a big part in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s early life.

2. _____ Dr. King grew up hating the rich.

3. _____ All of the schools Dr. King attended were segregated.

4. _____ Dr. King's father was a man of principle.

5. _____ His father's reaction to the shoestore incident had a great impact on young Martin.

*Strategy 3*

In December 1955, Rosa Parks boarded a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. That bus ride had repercussions for all Black people and catapulted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. into national prominence.

INTRODUCTION

Have students consider the following:

> There was not enough room on the playground for everyone to use it at the same time. So the principal made this rule: Boys may use the playing field on Mondays only. Girls may use it the rest of the week.

Ask students how they would feel if such a rule were made by their principal. What would they do? Is this a good rule? What is bad about it? Is it ever right to break a bad rule or law? What makes a rule or law good or bad? Explain.

DEVELOPMENT

- Distribute Worksheet 3A, "Rosa Parks." Inform students they are going to read how certain laws treated Black people unfairly. Tell students that before we begin this lesson there are some unfamiliar words we are going to discuss. Students should be familiar with such terms as boycott and picket before beginning this activity sheet. Write the following sentence on the blackboard:

  > Most customers felt prices in the store were too high. They decided to start a boycott and refuse to buy goods from this store until prices were lowered.

  Ask for student volunteers who can tell the class the meaning of the word boycott from this sentence. Have them pronounce the word boycott and read the sentence above. Ask students if they think a boycott will work in the situation described above. Would it be a good method to use in fighting against segregation? The same procedure should be used with the word picket.

- Divide the class into small groups of equal size. Each group is to assume the role of church leaders called together by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. just after the Rosa Parks incident. Instruct each group to read, examine the picture and decide on the probable results of the various options open to Montgomery's Black population.

- Review students' decision charts.

- Ask a representative of each group to report on and explain the group's recommended choice of action.

- Finally, have students explain their answers to the following questions:

- What happened to Rosa Parks?

- Why was she arrested?

- Was Rosa Parks right to refuse to give up her seat when it meant breaking the law? Explain. Did it take courage for Rosa Parks to refuse to move to the back of the bus? Explain. Is it ever right to break the law? Explain your answer.

- What could Montgomery's Blacks have done about the arrest of Rosa Parks? What actions could they have taken?

- Which of the possible actions would have had the best results for Montgomery's Blacks? Which action would have been best for getting the segregated bus law changed? Explain.

. Distribute Worksheet 3B, "Decision and Results." Have students read and complete the exercise on the worksheet. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

- What did Montgomery's Black church leaders decide to do about Rosa Parks' arrest?

- How did Montgomery's Black people answer the call for a bus boycott?

- What do you think about the boycott as a way of protesting segregated buses? What do you suppose Montgomery's Black citizens hoped to achieve by the boycott? Explain.

- What is good about using such a method? What is bad about using this method? Explain.

- If you were a Black person in Montgomery in 1955, would you have joined the boycott? Why or why not?

- What finally did bring about an end to segregated buses in Montgomery? Was it the boycott or was it the Supreme Court, or was it both? Explain.

- Would it have been better if the bus company itself decided to end segregation on the buses instead of being told by the Supreme Court to do so? Explain.

- Dr. King and his fellow church leaders believed that nonviolent methods to end segregation and discrimination are best. Did the results of the Montgomery boycott show that nonviolent methods are better than other methods? Explain.

# *Rosa Parks*

Mrs. Rosa Parks took a seat near the front of the bus. She was tired from a long day's work.

A white man got on the bus. Mrs. Parks knew he would want her seat. Blacks had to give up their seats if the bus was crowded.

The man stood by her seat. He waited for her to get up.

Mrs. Parks said she was tired. And she did not move.

The white man then talked to the bus driver. The driver stopped the bus and asked Mrs. Parks to give up her seat. Again, she said no.

The driver called a police officer. He arrested Mrs. Parks.

It was December 1, 1955. The city was Montgomery, Alabama.

Ann Elwood, *Our American Minorities* (New York: Globe Book Co., 1978), pp. 96-97.

Henry F. Graff and Paul Bohannan, *The Promise of Democracy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1978), p. 366.

**Rosa Parks is fingerprinted after her arrest for violating segregation laws.**

The night after Mrs. Parks's arrest, a young minister named Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called a meeting of church leaders. He wanted them to decide what to do about Mrs. Parks's arrest.

Pretend that you are this group of church leaders. In column 1, some of the possible actions which might have been taken to protest Mrs. Parks's arrest and the bus segregation law are listed. Add to this list, if you wish. In column 2, check ( ✓ ) what you think will probably be the result of each action. You can write your own result in the space provided (c), if you wish.

| (1) POSSIBLE ACTIONS | (2) POSSIBLE RESULTS OF THESE ACTIONS |
|---|---|
| Picket Montgomery's City Hall | ___ a. The mayor will come out to talk to you.<br>___ b. The mayor will ignore the picketing.<br>___ c. _____ |
| Block the roads on which the segregated buses travel. | ___ a. Traffic will stop and white people will realize that the law is bad.<br>___ b. Buses and cars will drive through the blockade and people will be hurt.<br>___ c. _____ |
| Write letters to the mayor protesting the bus segregation law. | ___ a. The mayor will be convinced that the law should be changed.<br>___ b. The mayor will ignore the letters or will not read them.<br>___ c. _____ |
| Force your way into bus seats reserved for whites. | ___ a. Whites will see that you have a right to those seats and they won't stop you.<br>___ b. You will be forced out of the seats, arrested for breaking the law and people will get hurt.<br>___ c. _____ |
| Boycott (refuse to ride) the buses until the segregation law is changed. | ___ a. The bus company will lose money and then will ask the government to change the law.<br>___ b. The bus company will lay off some drivers and raise fares rather than allow Blacks to sit where they wish.<br>___ c. _____ |
| Other | ___ a. _____<br>___ b. _____<br>___ c. _____ |

## Decision and Results

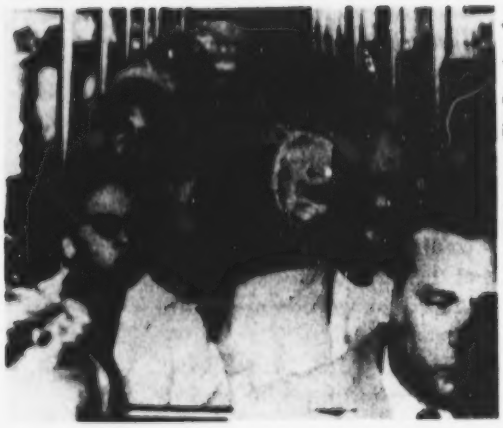
The following headlines tell what Dr. King and the other church leaders decided to do about Rosa Parks's arrest and the results of their decision.

| The Times | | |
|---|---|---|
| **DECEMBER 1955** | **JULY 1956** | **DECEMBER 1956** |
| **MONTGOMERY'S BLACK LEADERS ASK BOYCOTT OF CITY BUSES** | **MOST MONTGOMERY BLACKS WALK, SHARE RIDES, OR TAKE CABS—WON'T RIDE SEGREGATED BUSES** | **SUPREME COURT: SEGREGATED BUSES ILLEGAL— BLACKS CAN RIDE ANYWHERE!** **BOYCOTT ENDS** |
| | | |

EXERCISE

You are a writer for the Times. You need pictures to illustrate the three headlines. The newspaper's photographer has just given you the following two photos. Match each of these photographs to the corresponding headline by placing it in the appropriate space. For the headline that is left over, draw a picture or a symbol to illustrate what the headline says.

Ira Peck, et al., *American Adventures* (Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn, 1983), p. 613.



Henry F. Graff and Paul Bohannan, *The Promise of Democracy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1978), p. 366.

*Strategy 4*

Dr. King was influenced by the thinking of Gandhi. He tried to apply Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence to the racial problem in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

Show students the photographs on Worksheet 4A, "Two Nonviolent Methods of Protest." Ask them what the protesters are doing in each picture. Have them identify the method of protest being used in each photograph and write its name in the appropriate space on the worksheet. What are the protesters hoping to achieve by these methods? What will these nonviolent protesters do if someone strikes them or if the police try to arrest them? (Be sure students understand that if attacked or arrested, these protesters will not resist.) Then have students rate each nonviolent method on the following scale, which can be reproduced on the chalkboard.

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| won't work at all | will work somewhat | will work | will work well |

Have students explain the reasons for their ratings. Ask them whether the success of any nonviolent method depends on the particular situation.

DEVELOPMENT

. Distribute Worksheet 4B, "Nonviolence." Inform students that they are going to read a newspaper interview in which Martin Luther King, Jr. explains his views on nonviolence as a means of ending segregation. Have two students enact the interview as the rest of the class reads along. After students complete the exercise, review it and then have them explain their answers to the following questions:

- What does Dr. King mean by nonviolence?
- According to Dr. King, how can nonviolent methods be used against evil?
- How do the photographs on Worksheet 4A illustrate Dr. King's explanation of nonviolent methods? Explain.
- Why was Dr. King against using violent methods to achieve equality?
- Why did Dr. King think that nonviolence is the best way of dealing with racial hatred? Explain.
- Do you agree that nonviolence is the best way for Blacks to deal with segregation and discrimination? Explain.
- Does violence ever settle a problem? Explain.

# *Two Nonviolent Methods of Protest*

**1**

Wide World of Photos.
Bernard Feder, *Conscience Versus Law* (New York: Globe Book

*In Jackson, Mississippi on July 13, 1961, four blacks staged a sit-in at a drug store lunch counter reserved for whites only.*

**2**

UPI
Bernard Feder, *Conscience Versus Law* (New York: Globe Book Co., 1975), p. 32.

*In addition to sit-ins, other forms of civil disobedience were carried out during the 1960's. The demonstrators shown here are blocking traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House.*

# *Nonviolence*

After reading the interview below, pretend that you are the reporter interviewing Dr. King. Use the space provided to write another question that you, as a reporter, would have asked Dr. King. Then answer the question as you think Dr. King would have answered it.

As a result of the Montgomery bus boycott, Dr. King's belief that nonviolent protest works best was strengthened. If a reporter for the Times had interviewed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. about his belief in nonviolence, he might have said the following:

REPORTER: Dr. King, when did you first hear about using nonviolence as a way to bring about change?

DR. KING: When I was in college I read a book by Henry David Thoreau that moved me deeply. In his book, Thoreau explained how, to protest against slavery, he refused to pay his taxes. He was sent to jail.

REPORTER: Weren't you also influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, the great leader of India?

DR. KING: Yes, I once heard a speech on the teachings of Gandhi. I was so excited that I bought a half dozen books on Gandhi's life and work.

REPORTER: Dr. King, what do you mean by "nonviolence"?

DR. KING: Nonviolence means using peaceful ways, like boycotts, sit-ins and marches, to show the people doing evil that they are wrong.

REPORTER: But if someone hates you, shouldn't you hate back? If someone strikes you, shouldn't you strike back?

DR. KING: Nothing is accomplished by using fists or weapons against people who are doing evil. To strike back at the evil-doers would only increase the amount of hate in the world. Someone must have sense enough to cut off the chain of hate. All men are brothers. When I hurt my brother, no matter what he is doing to me, I am hurting myself.

REPORTER: _____

DR. KING: _____

Adapted from Daniel J. Boorstin, et al., *A History of the United States* (Lexington, MA: Ginn and Co., 1981), p. 614.

*Strategy 5*

Dr. King was very effective not only in uniting Blacks, but in gaining the sympathy of a large segment of the white population. This was clearly evident when he led 250,000 Blacks and whites in the famous 1963 March on Washington to push for support of a comprehensive Civil Rights Bill. It was here that he made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

INTRODUCTION

Ask students whether they have ever had a dream for the future of America and the American people. If they had such a dream, what would it be? Do they think their dream will one day come true? What can you do now to make sure that your dream comes true?

DEVELOPMENT

. Distribute Worksheet 5, "March on Washington." Tell students they are going to read about Dr. Martin Luther King,Jr.'s dream for America. Before having students read, review difficult vocabulary by writing the following sentences on the chalkboard and asking students to determine the meaning of the underlined words from their context.

1. The woman lived by her creed: Treat others as you would like to be treated.
2. The weak, sickly child's need for food was self-evident.

. Have students read, complete the exercise on the worksheet, and then explain their answers to the following questions:

- What is Dr. King saying in this speech?

- What does Dr. King mean by, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up to live out the true meaning of its creed"? From what famous document does the phrase "We hold these truths...." come?

. Read paragraph 3 aloud. Ask students the meaning of this paragraph. Has the time come in the United States when people are judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin? Explain.

- How do you feel listening to Dr. King's speech? Explain.

- How is Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech similar to Langston Hughes's poem, "I, Too, Sing America" (Worksheet 1B)? Explain.

- To what degree has Dr. King's dream come true? Will it ever come true? Explain.

. Draw the following continuum on the chalkboard:

Blacks have no rights in the United States

Full equality of Blacks and whites exists today

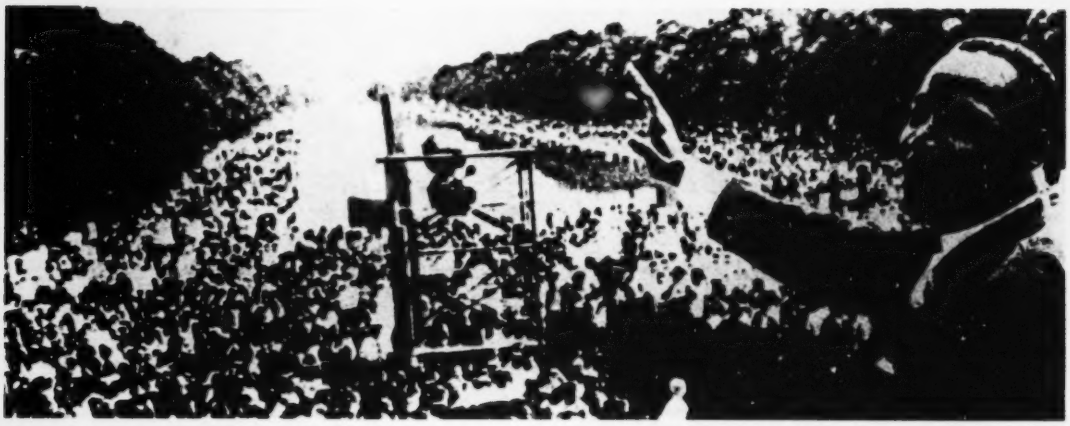
. Explain that this line (called a continuum) shows a range of opinion on whether equality between Blacks and whites (Dr. King's dream) has come true. The two poles are identified and the numbers within them represent positions between the extremes. Have three or four student volunteers come up to the continuum and stand at the place which best represents their opinion about the extent to which Dr. King's dream has come true. Classmates may ask the volunteers to explain reasons for their positions; however, debate should not ensue.

. Have students illustrate, by drawing or painting, one or all parts of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

. After discussing their dream for America, students should write a newspaper editorial describing their dream.

# *March on Washington*

Today is August 28, 1963. You are a newspaper reporter, present in Washington, D.C. at a demonstration of 250,000 people--both Black and white. These people want Congress to pass a law saying that all people have the right to be served in hotels, eating places and stores. They also want Congress to make it against the law to stand in the way of a person's right to vote.



James T. deKay, *Meet Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 71.

Listen to the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

1. "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up to live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

2. "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood."

3. "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

4. "I have a dream that one day we will all join hands and sing the old Negro spiritual:

   Free at last!
   Free at last!
   Thank God Almighty,
   We're free at last."

*Makers of America* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1971), pp. 24-25.

EXERCISE

The afternoon edition of your newspaper, the Times, has already gone to press. Only two lines have been saved in this edition (the evening edition will print the full story) for the main idea of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech at the Washington Monument.

Write the main idea of Dr. King's speech below as it will appear in the Times.

_____

_____

*Strategy 6*

Like many other great leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was struck down before he could live out a full life. However, his legacy remains with us and will continue.

INTRODUCTION

Ask students whom they consider to be the greatest person to live in the twentieth century. What are the ingredients that make a person great?

DEVELOPMENT

. Distribute Worksheet 6A, "Highlights of Dr. King's Life" and Worksheet 6B, "Scrapbook of Dr. King's Life." Tell students that they are going to read about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s accomplishments and why he has been considered one of the greatest Americans of the twentieth century. Have students read, examine the photographs and follow the directions on the worksheet. Then have them explain their answers to the following questions:

  - What do these headlines and pictures tell us about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life?

  - What contributions did Dr. King make to the history of humankind? Explain.

  - What evidence is there here that Dr. King was concerned, not only for Black Americans, but for all people? Explain.

  - Which of Dr. King's actions took the most courage? Explain.

  - Which do you think was Dr. King's most important contribution to the history of humankind? Explain.

  - Was Dr. King one of the greatest people who has lived in the twentieth century? Explain.

  - One hundred years from now, what do you think Dr. King will be most remembered for? Explain.

  - What are the ingredients that make a person great? Explain.

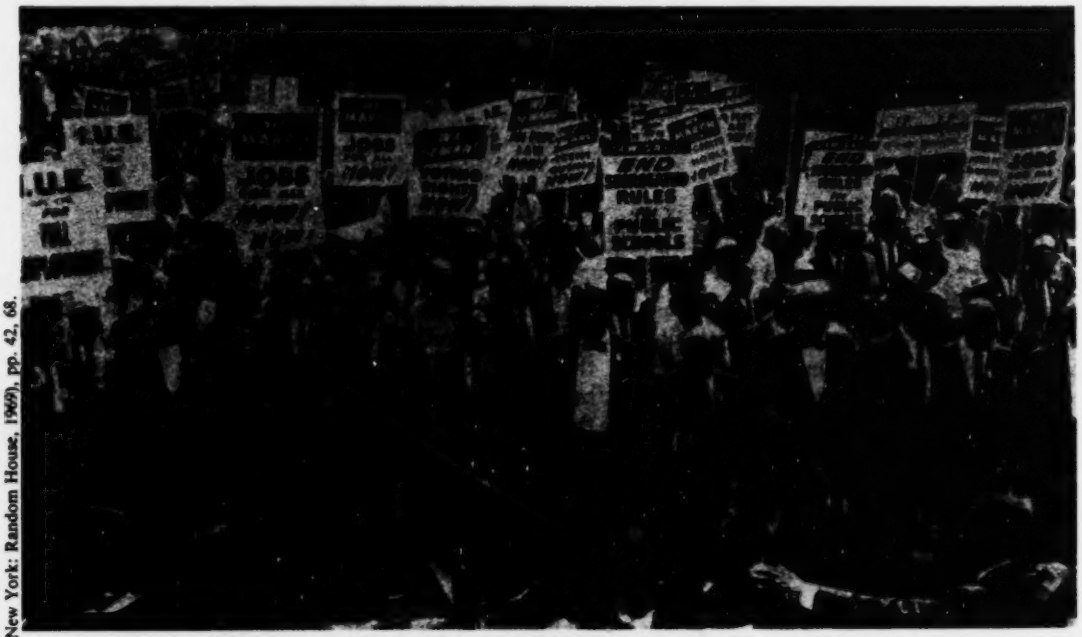
. Have students make their own scrapbook of Dr. King's life and accomplishments. They can use the photographs on Worksheet 6B and then add others. (Several biographies of Dr. King are commonly available in public libraries and pictures xeroxed from them would make a fine scrapbook.) Students should research the stories behind the pictures they choose to include and then write a short explanatory paragraph under each.

## *Highlights of Dr. King's Life*

DR. KING'S EFFORTS RESULT IN NEW NATIONAL LAW PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF BLACKS IN HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, ETC. (1964)
DR. KING'S EFFORTS RESULT IN A NEW NATIONAL LAW TO PROTECT THE RIGHT OF BLACK PEOPLE TO VOTE (1965)
KING SPEAKS OUT AGAINST U.S. FIGHTING IN VIETNAM CALLS WAR WRONG (1967)
DR. KING HELPS END SEGREGATION IN BIRMINGHAM ALABAMA (1962)
DR. KING MURDERED IN MEMPHIS WHILE SUPPORTING STRIKE BY BLACK AND WHITE SANITATION WORKERS (1968)
M.L.K., JR. PLANS A POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN TO DEMAND JOBS FOR BLACKS AND WHITES (1968)
DR. KING LEADS A MARCH FROM SELMA TO MONTGOMERY TO PROTEST DENIAL OF BLACKS' RIGHT TO VOTE (1964)
DR. KING SENTENCED TO 4 MONTHS IN JAIL AFTER LEADING A SIT-IN (1960)
BUS BOYCOTT LED BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ENDS IN DESEGREGATION OF MONTGOMERY'S BUSES (1956)
DR. KING DELIVERS "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH DURING MARCH ON WASHINGTON (1963)
NOBEL PRIZE AWARDED TO DR. KING (1964)

# *Scrapbook of Dr. King's Life*

Some of the photographs below illustrate some of the collage headlines on Worksheet 6A. Match the photographs to the corresponding headlines by placing the letter of the photo in the circle above the headline.



UPI.

Dr. King led the March on Washington.

**A**

James T. deKay, *Meet Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 42, 68.

Black Star (Charles Moore).

Dr. King is arrested for civil rights activities.

**B**

Wide World Photos.
Benjamin Da Silva, Milton Finkelstein, and Arlene Loshin, *The Afro-American in United States History* (New York: Globe Book Co., 1972), p. 327.

**C**

Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rev. Glenn Smiley of New York on a Montgomery bus after the boycott.

**D**

UPI. James T. deKay, *Meet Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 78.

Dr. King leads march from Selma to Montgomery.

UPI. Edward Preston, *Martin Luther King: Fighter for Freedom* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968).

Dr. King receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, December 10, 1964. Dr. King was honored for his nonviolent leadership of the American movement for civil rights.

**E**

F

UPI. Margaret B. Young, *The Picture Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Watts, 1968), p. 37.

President Johnson shakes hands with Dr. King after some new laws were made.

G

UPI. Edward Preston, *Martin Luther King: Fighter for Freedom* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968).

April 9, 1968. Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr., holds her youngest daughter during the funeral service for her husband at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.

H

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., his wife Coretta, and their three children.

Wide World Photos.
Benjamin Da Silva, Milton Finkelstein, and Arlene Loshin, *The Afro-American in United States History* (New York: Globe Book Co., 1972), p. 421.

*Strategy 7*

In October, 1983, Congress passed a bill authorizing a federal holiday to begin in 1986 in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The new holiday will serve to continually remind Americans of the importance of Dr. King's life and work.

INTRODUCTION

Ask students to name the two Americans who are now honored with a national holiday. If students do not know, tell them that George Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are the two individuals. (Abraham Lincoln's birthday is a New York State, not a federal, holiday.) Are Dr. King and George Washington alike in any ways? Why establish national holidays to honor these Americans?

DEVELOPMENT

. Distribute Worksheet 7, "Dr. King's Meaning for Children Today." Tell students they are going to read how students from the city of Birmingham, Alabama, where Dr. King led sit-ins and boycotts, feel about him today. Have class read the excerpts of students' writings concerning Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

- What does Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. mean today to the children of Birmingham?

- Why do you suppose children who were not even born when Dr. King did his work are so grateful to him? Explain.

- Would the lives of these children be the same today if Dr. King had not achieved what he did? Explain.

- Should all Americans be grateful for Dr. King's life? Explain.

- Why do you suppose many people, Black and white, pressed Congress to honor Dr. King with a national holiday?

- Is a national holiday a fitting way to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Explain.

. After students have discussed the excerpts written by the Birmingham students, ask them to express their <u>own</u> feelings about Dr. King. Next, have the class write their feelings about Dr. King. Finally, have them exchange papers with their neighbors. Students who believe they have good papers should be encouraged to read them to the class.

Have students brainstorm different ways Martin Luther King Jr. Day could be celebrated and his life and work commemorated--in their classroom, on a school-wide basis, in their local community, in New York City and in the nation. Children might actually implement some of their ideas for classroom or school-wide celebrations (e.g., dramatizations, readings from Dr. King's speeches, assembly programs, essay and art contests, murals, etc.). More ambitious projects might be initiated for next year. Interested students might write letters to the Mayor, to City Council members, to Representatives and Senators describing their suggestions for city and national celebrations.

# *Dr. King's Meaning for Children Today*

Twenty years after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led sit-ins and boycotts to desegregate Birmingham, Alabama, children of that city were asked by their teacher to write their feelings about the slain civil rights leader. Read their words and then, in the space provided, write your own feelings about Dr. King--his life and work.

"Dr. King has given us many contributions, not only to blacks, but also to whites.

"Once when I was in the 6th grade, my teacher asked the whole class to memorize a speech that Dr. King delivered before he died. I thought it was rather stupid to bring a dead man out of his grave. But the day came . . . to say the speech. I approached the center of the classroom and something came over me. I felt chills all over [as] I said the glorious speech with a lot of expression, and I . . . meant every word I said."

— MICHELLE DANIEL

"To me, Dr. King was daring, faithful and very brave. I feel that I should be grateful for King, because what he did, he did not have to do. [H]e could have sat back and kept quiet, but he didn't, and I'm glad he didn't.

"Thanks to him I can sit where I please [and] go to school where I please. Now that he is dead, I feel that I should take it upon myself to carry on . . . his beliefs."

— LA DONNA JACKSON

"I think the point of Martin Luther King was to let us know that we are somebody. All men and women are created equal [so] it doesn't matter about race, creed, sex or color. Martin Luther King was a great [man] who tried to get some thoughts to all poor blacks and whites [that] no matter how down you may be, always keep your head up."

— BARBARA JACKSON

Text and Photos from *The American Teacher, December 1983/January 1984, p. 4.*

YOUR NAME

Secondary Grades (7-12)

## A Guide to Celebrating

# Martin Luther King Jr. Day

NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT • DIVISION OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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# *Introduction*

I remember a trip to a downtown shoestore with father when I was still small. We sat down in the first empty seats at the front of the store. A young white clerk came up and murmured politely:

"I'll be happy to wait on you if you'll just move to those seats in the rear."

My father answered, "There's nothing wrong with these seats. We're quite comfortable here."

"Sorry," said the clerk, "but you'll have to move."

"We'll either buy shoes sitting here," my father retorted, "or we won't buy shoes at all." Whereupon he took me by the hand and walked out of the store. This was the first time I had ever seen my father so angry. I still remember walking down the street beside him as he muttered, "I don't care how long I have to live with this system, I will never accept it."

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

It is obvious that the son shared his father's determination to resist oppression. From the time he led the Montgomery bus boycott until his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. played an important role, not only in the United States civil rights movement but in the cause for freedom around the world.

Like all great people, Dr. King was endowed with unique abilities. Not only was he gifted with superior intelligence but also with the charisma necessary for leadership. At Morehouse College (Atlanta) he was a sociology major, an orator and member of the choir. Later he became a Baptist minister. In 1954, he was awarded a Ph.D. degree from Boston University.

What makes Dr. King's contribution to humankind so significant was his appeal to the conscience--a person's will to do right. Dr. King believed that there was more strength in nonviolence than violence and that love could conquer hate.

While some people questioned Dr. King's nonviolent tactics, no one questioned his commitment. Certainly, few would disagree that Dr. King shook the conscience of America with a message that will not soon be forgotten.

# *Performance Objectives*

The strategies and worksheets in this guide have been developed to help students learn about the important contributions Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made to the achievement of civil rights for all Americans. By participating in the activities in this guide, students will be able to:

- Describe the political and social situation of Black Americans during the first part of the twentieth century.
- Analyze the alternative actions Blacks could have taken in the 1950s to end segregation.
- Explain Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolent resistance.
- Evaluate nonviolent resistance as a method for achieving change.
- Recognize the many facets of Dr. King's concern and involvement.
- Assess the contribution of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to the history of humankind.

# *Strategies and Worksheets*

***Strategy 1***

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to prominence at a time (the 1950s) when social progress for Blacks in America was painfully slow. Southern Blacks faced a segregated and often unsympathetic society where basic rights were often denied. Legal sanction had been given to segregation when the Supreme Court ruled in Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896) that "separate but equal" public accommodation laws were constitutional. This decision was reversed when the Court ruled in Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) that separate public schools by their nature could not be equal. Despite major obstacles to full equality, many Black Americans looked to the future with hope.

. Distribute Worksheet 1, "Separate But Equal?" Have students examine the photographs, read and explain their answers to the following questions:

- What do these pictures tell you about life for American Blacks during the first part of the twentieth century?

- Why do you suppose conditions like those in the photographs existed in this country?

- The poet says, "Tomorrow, I'll be at the table when company comes...." What does he mean?

- Do you think "tomorrow" has come for Black people? Explain your answer.

- What might Black people have done during the first part of the twentieth century to correct the situation shown in the pictures? What methods would have been effective? Explain.

- Is poetry, such as "I, Too, Sing America," an effective form of protest? Could this poem have had an impact on the situation shown in the photographs? Explain.

# *Separate But Equal?*

The following photographs suggest the racial situation in the South at about the time that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came on the national scene. This situation had been declared constitutional by the Supreme Court in its 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson "separate but equal" ruling. The poem, although written in the 1920s, expresses the feelings of many Black Americans in the 1950s about their situation.

I, TOO,
SING AMERICA

Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes.
But I laugh.
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed -

I, too, am America.

Arnold Adolf, ed., *I Am The Darker Brother,* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968) p. 75.

***Strategy 2***

In December 1955, Rosa Parks boarded a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. That bus ride had repercussions for all Black people and catapulted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. into national prominence.

. Distribute Worksheet 2A, "Rosa Parks." Have students complete the exercise on the worksheet. Then have them explain their answers to the following questions:

- Describe in your own words the Rosa Parks incident.

- What actions would you have suggested Blacks in Montgomery take in response to the Rosa Parks incident?

- Which of these suggested actions would have had the most desirable short range consequences? long range consequences?

- Which of the suggested actions would have been most effective in getting the segregated bus law changed?

. Distribute Worksheet 2B, "Stride Toward Freedom." Have students explain their answers to the following questions:

- What is your reaction to the boycott as a method of protesting segregated buses? Explain.

- What are the advantages of using such a method? What are the disadvantages of employing such a method?

- If you were living in Montgomery as a Black person in 1956, how would you have reacted to the boycott? As a white person, how would you have reacted to the boycott?

- Did the boycott take too long to produce the desired results? Explain.

- Would it have been better if the bus company itself decided to desegregate the buses rather than being told by the Supreme Court to do so?

- Did the results of the boycott indicate that nonviolent methods of dealing with racism, advocated by Dr. King and his fellow church leaders, were better than other methods? Explain.

# *Rosa Parks*

Rosa Parks was a Negro seamstress in a downtown Montgomery, Alabama department store. She rode the bus every day to and from work. One evening in December 1955, Mrs. Parks boarded her bus as usual and found there were no seats in the rear. Negroes were required to sit in the rear of Montgomery buses or in a sort of "neutral" zone in the middle of the bus--provided no white people required the "neutral" seats. Mrs. Parks sat in the "neutral" zone, but only for a short time. Boarding white passengers demanded that she give up her seat. But Mrs. Parks had worked hard all day, and her feet hurt. She refused to budge. The driver stopped the bus and had Mrs. Parks arrested. As she was being taken off to jail, the news of what had happened spread quickly through the Negro section of Montgomery.

E. D. Nixon, former state N.A.A.C.P. president, bailed Mrs. Parks out of jail and then got busy telephoning Negro leaders in the city. One of the men he called was the twenty-seven-year-old minister of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King had grown up in Atlanta, Georgia, gone to college there, and studied for the ministry in Pennsylvania. He had lived in Montgomery for only one year but was already acknowledged as a leader of its Negro community. Nixon and King got together forty of Montgomery's most influential Negroes and decided...

Robert B. Goldston, *The Negro Revolution* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 206-207.

Directions:

The night after Mrs. Parks' arrest, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 27, called a meeting of church leaders in his Baptist church. He wanted them to decide what action to take in response to Mrs. Parks' arrest. In column 1 list all the possible actions which could have been taken to protest the arrest of Mrs. Parks and the bus segregation law. In column 2 list the short-range consequences of each action and in column 3 list the long-range consequences of each action.

| 1<br>Possible Actions | 2<br>Short-range Consequences | 3<br>Long-range Consequences |
|---|---|---|
| a. | | |
| b. | | |
| c. | | |
| d. | | |
| e. | | |
| f. | | |

# *Stride Toward Freedom*

In Stride Toward Freedom, Dr. King described the action decided upon by Montgomery's Black leaders:

> By the next afternoon, the news of the arrest of Mrs. Parks was becoming public knowledge. Word of it spread around the community like an uncontrolled fire. Telephones began to ring. By two o'clock a group had mimeographed leaflets describing the action agreed upon. By evening, these leaflets had been widely circulated. One of them read:
>
> DON'T RIDE THE BUS TO
> WORK, TO TOWN, OR ANY
> PLACE, MONDAY, DECEMBER 5th.
> IF YOU WORK, TAKE A CAB
> OR SHARE A RIDE OR WALK.

---

The news stories below described the bus boycott and its results:

1956... MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

MONTGOMERY, Alabama, July 3 - The boycott of Montgomery's only bus line by this city's 50,000 Negroes has been effective. The local bus company had carried about 20,000 Negroes a day before the boycott began. Since then, Negro bus riders have averaged 200 a day.

1956... SUPREME COURT RULES SEGREGATED BUSES UNCONSTITUTIONAL

MONTGOMERY, Alabama, December 18 - Today the Negro boycott of Montgomery's city bus line organized by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ended. After 381 days of walking, taking taxies and car pooling, Negroes were able to ride buses to work, sitting in any part of the bus they wished. All this has been the result of a Supreme Court ruling declaring the segregation of buses unconstitutional.

Edward Fenton, *The Americans* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), p. 417.

*Strategy 3*

Very much influenced by the thinking of Gandhi, Dr. King tried to apply the philosophy of nonviolence to the racial problem in the United States.

. Distribute Worksheet 3, "Boycott Pamphlet." Ask students to explain their answers to the following questions:

- What advice did Dr. King give to Blacks in this pamphlet?

- Why did Dr. King say, "Be quiet but friendly; proud, but not arrogant; joyous, but not boisterous?"

- Do you think this was good advice to give Black people? Why or why not?

- If you were a Black in Montgomery at that time, how would you have reacted to receiving this pamphlet? Would you have followed Dr. King's advice? Explain.

# *Boycott Pamphlet*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ideas were expressed in a pamphlet distributed by his supporters after the buses in Montgomery were integrated.

Within a few days the Supreme Court Mandate will reach Montgomery and you will be re-boarding integrated buses. This places upon us all a tremendous responsibility of maintaining, in the face of what could be some unpleasantness, a calm and loving dignity befitting good citizens and members of our race. If there is violence in word or deed it must not be our people who commit it.

First some general suggestions:

Not all white people are opposed to integrated buses. Accept goodwill on the part of many.

The whole bus is now for the use of all people. Take a vacant seat...Be quiet but friendly; proud, but not arrogant; joyous, but not boisterous...

Now for some specific suggestions:

The bus driver is in charge of the bus and has been instructed to obey the law. Assume that he will cooperate in helping you occupy any vacant seat. Do not deliberately sit by a white person, unless there is no other seat...in case of an incident, talk as little as possible, and always in a quiet tone. Do not get up from your seat! Report all serious incidents to the bus driver... If you feel you cannot take it, walk for another week or two. We have confidence in our people. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

Henry F. Graff and Paul Bohannan, *The Promise of Democracy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1978), p. 366-367.

*Strategy 4*

The Montgomery bus boycott fortified Dr. King's belief in the philosophy of nonviolence. He would employ this philosophy many times when protesting racial injustice in cities like Birmingham (1962) and Selma (1964).

. Distribute Worksheet 4, "Nonviolence." Have students complete the exercise on the worksheet. Then ask students to explain their answers to the following questions:

- What is Dr. King saying about nonviolent resistance in this article?
- Why does Dr. King say that "nonviolent resistance is not for cowards"? Do you agree?
- In what ways does "non-resistance (nonviolence) attack the forces of evil rather than the person who happens to be doing the evil"?
- Do you think that nonviolent protest (e.g., the Montgomery bus boycott) would likely win the friendship of the whites who had opposed the desegregation of Montgomery buses? Explain.
- Why does Dr. King believe that nonviolence is a better way of coping with racism than other ways?
- Dr. King believed that to disobey an unjust law (e.g., segregated lunch counters) was justified as long as it was done peacefully. Do you agree?
- If you were a Black being addressed by Dr. King at this time (1960), how would you have reacted to his plea for nonviolence?
- Do you agree that nonviolence was the most effective way of dealing with racism? Explain.

# *Nonviolence*

As a result of the Montgomery experience, Dr. King's belief in the effectiveness of nonviolent protest was strengthened.

> During my freshman days in 1944 at Atlanta's Morehouse College, I read Henry David Thoreau's essay on "Civil Disobedience" for the first time. Here, in this courageous New Englander's refusal to pay his taxes and his choice of jail rather than support a war that would spread slavery's territory into Mexico, I made my first contact with the theory of nonviolent resistance. Fascinated by Thoreau's idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system, I was so deeply moved that I reread the work several times.
>
> A few years later I heard a lecture by Dr. Mordecai Johnson, President of Howard University. Dr. Johnson had just returned from a trip to India and he spoke of the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. His message was so profound and electrifying that I left the meeting and bought a half dozen books on Gandhi's life and works...
>
> Non-resistance (nonviolence) attacks the forces of evil rather than the person who happens to be doing the evil...
>
> It must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not for cowards. If one uses this method because he is afraid or merely because he lacks the weapons of violence, he is not truly nonviolent. That is why Gandhi often said that if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight. He made this statement knowing that there is always another choice we can make: There is the way of nonviolent resistance. No individual or group need submit to any wrong, nor need they use violence to right a wrong. This is ultimately the way of the strong man...
>
> The phrase "passive resistance" often gives the false impression that this is a sort of "do nothing method" in which the resister quietly and passively accepts evil. But nothing is further from the truth. For while the nonviolent resister is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade his opponent that he is wrong--constantly seeking to open the eyes of blind prejudice. This is not passive non-resistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil.

William L. Katz, *Eye-Witness: The Negro in American History* (New York: Pitman, 1968), pp. 511-513.

Nonviolence does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. To strike back in the same way as his opponent would do nothing but increase the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate.

In the final analysis all life is interrelated. All humanity is involved in a single process, and all men are brothers. To the degree that I harm my brother, no matter what he is doing to me, to that extent I am harming myself. Why is this? Because men are brothers. If you harm me, you harm yourself.

Bob Fitch/Black Star

Daniel J. Boorstin, et al., *A History of the United States* (Lexington, MA: Ginn and Co., 1981), p. 614.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

EXERCISE

Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolent resistance caused a great deal of controversy in both the Black and white communities. Assume it is the year 1960 and you have either heard or read Dr. King's views on nonviolence. You have just decided to write Dr. King a letter to let him know your feelings about his philosophy.

Dear Dr. King:

I have recently been doing a great deal of thinking about your philosophy of nonviolence. Let me say that I _____ (agree or disagree) with you. I feel this way because _____

_____

_____

Another reason for my opinion is _____

_____

_____

_____

Finally, let me say that _____

_____

_____

_____

Yours truly,

_____

*Strategy 5*

Dr. King was very effective not only in uniting Blacks, but in gaining the sympathy of a large segment of the white population. This was clearly evident when he led 250,000 Blacks and whites in the famous 1963 March on Washington to push for support of a comprehensive Civil Rights Bill. It was here that he made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

. Distribute Worksheet 5, "March on Washington." Have students formulate an appropriate headline for the news story giving reasons for their suggestions.

. Ask students to explain their answers to the following questions:

- What is Dr. King saying in this speech?

- Explain what is meant by the phrase "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up to live out the true meaning of its creed."

- As a Black person, how would you have felt listening to Dr. King's speech? Would this speech appeal to white Americans? Explain.

- How does Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech compare to Langston Hughes's poem, "I, Too, Sing America"?

- To what degree has Dr. King's dream come true? Explain.

- Will his dream ever come true? Explain.

# *March on Washington*

**The Times**

August 28, 1963

Today Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stirred the emotions of the 250,000 Blacks and whites gathered here to press Congress to pass President Kennedy's Civil Rights Bill--a bill which calls for equal access by all persons to public accommodations in interstate commerce, including hotels, restaurants, and stores. In part, this is what Dr. King said:

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up to live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character....

"I have a dream that one day we will all join hands and sing the old Negro spiritual

"Free at last!
Free at last!
Thank God Almighty,
We are free at last."

*Makers of America* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1971), pp. 24-25.

*Strategy 6*

The racial situation was not the only one which attracted Dr. King's attention. When the United States appeared to be hopelessly entrenched in the Vietnam War, Dr. King felt it was time to speak out. Many civil rights leaders criticized Dr. King's position that not all his efforts should be concentrated on the racial dilemma.

. Distribute Worksheet 6, "Vietnam War." Have students complete the exercise on the worksheet; then have them explain their answers to the following questions:

- Describe in your own words what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is saying in this speech.

- Why was he so concerned about the continuing war in Vietnam?

- From this speech, what would you conclude about the interests and concerns of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Explain.

- What impact would taking such a strong position against the Vietnam War have on Dr. King's leadership in the civil rights movement?

- Considering all that remained to be done in the civil rights struggle, should Dr. King have become involved in the anti-Vietnam movement? Why or why not?

# *Vietnam War*

Dr. King did not only speak out about racial matters. In 1967, Dr. King decided to speak out in opposition to the Vietnam War. Many Civil Rights leaders criticized him saying that too much work remained in the struggle for Black rights. Others said that Dr. King's position would create unnecessary enemies among those who were not opposed to the war. After reading Dr. King's speech, write the reply that you think Dr. King would have written to those who criticized him for having spoken out on the Vietnam War.

Dr. King's Speech on the Vietnam War

So when in this day I see the leaders of nations again talking peace while preparing for war, I take fearful pause. When I see our country today intervening in what is basically a civil war, mutilating hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese children with napalm, burning villages and rice fields at random, painting the valleys of that small Asian country red with human blood, leaving broken bodies in countless ditches and sending home half-men, mutilated mentally and physically--and all this in the name of pursuing the goal of peace--I tremble for our world. I do so not only because of my recall of the nightmares caused by the wars of yesterday, but also from realization of today's possible nuclear destructiveness and tomorrow's even more dreadful prospects.

Dr. King's Reply to Critics of His Anti-Vietnam War Stand

Thomas T. Lyons, *Black Leadership in American History* (Menlo Park, CA: Addison Wesley, 1971), pp. 222-225.

*Strategy 7*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s leadership of the Black civil rights struggle came into question during the late 1960s when others, frustrated by the limited gains made by Blacks up to that time particulary in the North, questioned the tactic of nonviolence.

. Distribute Worksheet 7, "Alternatives to Dr. King." Have students complete the exercises on the worksheet. Then have them explain their answers to the following questions:

- Describe in your own words the various alternative methods for gaining Black equality that were put forth in the 1960s.

- How does Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s position compare with the positions of his critics?

- Which of the positions described is most extreme? moderate? Explain.

- Why do you suppose Dr. King's nonviolent approach was increasingly criticized in the 1960s?

- Would advocates of any of the four positions likely work together to achieve their goals? Explain.

- How do you react to each of these alternative positions? If you were a Black living in the 1960s, how would you have reacted to such advice? Explain.

- Whose advice do you think Blacks should have followed? Explain.

- Whose advice do you think is the wisest for people who are oppressed today? Explain.

# *Alternatives to King*

The 1960s saw many long accepted views attacked. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s view on how to achieve racial justice was criticized and several alternative courses of action were put forth. Dr. King's position as well as some significant alternative views are described below. Briefly note arguments <u>for</u> and <u>against</u> each position in the columns at the right.

| | FOR | AGAINST |
|---|---|---|
| <u>POSITION A</u> (Dr. King's): Black people will win equality by nonviolently resisting unjust laws and customs. The destiny of Blacks is tied up with the destiny of white people. We must work together. We cannot walk alone. Blacks have made more progress by working through the courts than by using violence. In Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) the U.S. Supreme Court said that segregated schools are unconstitutional. In 1962, the courts required that the University of Mississippi admit James Meredith, a Black man. | | |
| <u>POSITION B:</u> Only a revolution will accomplish things for Blacks. The "system" has herded Black people into ghettos; it has kept them poor and impotent. The system must be changed. | | |
| <u>POSITION C:</u> "Black Power" must be the goal of Black Americans. Blacks must control their own political and economic institutions in their own communities. They must build a power base that will be independent of and just as strong as that of white society. Only then will Blacks be able to claim the place that is rightfully theirs in America. | | |

EXERCISE

Rate each of the positions described above using the following two scales:

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| ineffective | somewhat effective | effective | most effective |

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| unjustified | somewhat unjustified | justified | most justified |

*Strategy 8*

Like many other great leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was struck down before he could live out a full life. However, his legacy remains with us. A new federal holiday commemorating Dr. King, to begin in 1986, will serve to continually remind Americans of that legacy.

. Distribute Worksheet 8, "The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." Have students complete the exercise on the worksheet; then have them explain their answers to the following questions:

- What do these headlines tell us about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s contribution to the history of humankind?

- What was Dr. King's greatest challenge?

- Which do you think was Dr. King's most important contribution to the history of humankind?

- To what degree does Dr. King deserve to be considered one of the greatest people who has lived in the twentieth century?

- One hundred years from now, what will Dr. King be most remembered for?

- What are the ingredients that make a person great? Explain.

- Is a federal holiday a fitting way to honor the memory of Dr. King? Explain.

# *The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

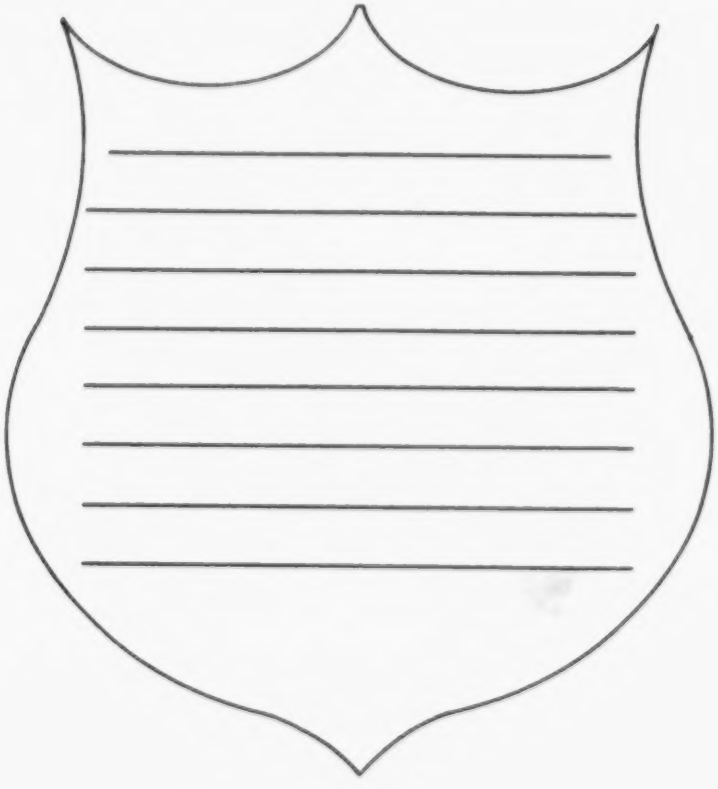
## The Times

| | |
|---|---|
| 1956 | BUS BOYCOTT LED BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. RESULTS IN DESEGREGATION OF MONTGOMERY'S BUSES |
| 1957 | KING ARRESTED AS A RESULT OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITIES |
| 1957 | SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AIMS TO SPREAD NON-VIOLENT PROTEST THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH |
| 1960 | KING SENTENCED TO 4 MONTHS AS A RESULT OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITIES |
| 1961 | ATTEMPT BY MARTIN LUTHER KING TO DESEGREGATE ALBANY (GA.) PUBLIC PLACES FAILS |
| 1962 | DR. KING CREDITED WITH HELPING TO DESEGREGATE BIRMINGHAM (ALA.), THE SOUTH'S MOST SEGREGATED CITY |
| 1963 | 930 PROTESTS AT 115 SOUTHERN SITES INSPIRED BY THE REV. KING |
| 1963 | 250,000 BLACKS AND WHITES, LED BY DR. KING, MARCH ON WASHINGTON, D.C. TO PRESS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS BILL |
| 1963 | "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH BY DR. KING MOVES CROWD |
| 1964 | CONGRESS PASSES IMPORTANT CIVIL RIGHTS BILL |
| 1964 | NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARDED TO REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. |
| 1964 | SELMA TO MONTGOMERY MARCH TO PROTEST DENIAL OF BLACKS' RIGHT TO VOTE LED BY DR. KING |
| 1965 | VOTING RIGHTS ACT PASSED |
| 1965 | DR. KING ATTACKS SEGREGATED HOUSING IN CHICAGO |
| 1966 | AGREEMENT REACHED IN CHICAGO TO OPEN HOUSING |
| 1967 | KING OPPOSES VIETNAM WAR |
| 1968 | KING PLANS POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN TO DEMAND JOBS FOR BLACKS AND WHITES |
| 1968 | KING ASSASSINATED IN MEMPHIS WHILE SUPPORTING BLACK AND WHITE SANITATION WORKERS |
| 1983 | BILL PASSED BY CONGRESS AUTHORIZING A FEDERAL HOLIDAY IN HONOR OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. |

**Worksheet 8 (continued)**

If there were a Hall of Fame for those who contributed to the history of humankind, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would undoubtedly be a member. Assuming the space below represented his plaque, compose a 100 word inscription to describe Dr. King's contribution to the history of humankind.

James T. deKay, *Meet Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 54.



*Strategy 9*

August 28, 1983 marked the twentieth anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. To commemorate that famous call for racial equality, civil rights groups organized another March on Washington led by the slain leader's son and namesake. The 1983 March became an occasion for reflecting on the changes that have occurred for Black Americans, the goals yet to be achieved, and the most effective strategies for achieving those goals.

. Distribute Worksheet 9, "Dr. King's Dream--20 Years Later." Have students read, examine the chart and complete the exercises. Review their responses and then have students explain their answers to the following questions:

- To what degree has Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of racial equality come true?

- What progress have American Blacks made since the 1963 March on Washington?

- How are the issues and concerns of Black Americans today different from the issues in 1963? Explain.

- Why are jobs a major concern of Blacks today? What has the trend in the unemployment rate for Blacks been since 1963?

- Why is the income of Blacks an issue of the 1980s? What has the trend been since 1963 in the income of Black families as a percentage of the income of white families?

- Why are civil rights groups today worried about the rising number of Black families headed by a female? How do you explain the relationship, noted in the article, between families headed by females and poverty?

- How do you account for the problems of Black Americans today? Explain.

- How are the strategies being used today to deal with the problems of Blacks different from the strategies used by Dr. King and his followers in the 1960s?

- John Jacob of the Urban League says that Blacks today use strategies different from Dr. King's to achieve their goals because the last 20 years have taught them that they have clout. What role did Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. play in showing Black people that they do have clout? Explain.

- Will the new strategies being used today by civil rights groups to improve the situation of Black Americans be effective? Will Dr. King's dream one day be fully realized? Explain.

# *Dr. King's Dream — 20 Years Later*

## *King's Dream:*

## *How It Stands 20 Years Later*

Yesterday the issues were voting rights, housing, public accommodations. Today's big worry is far different.

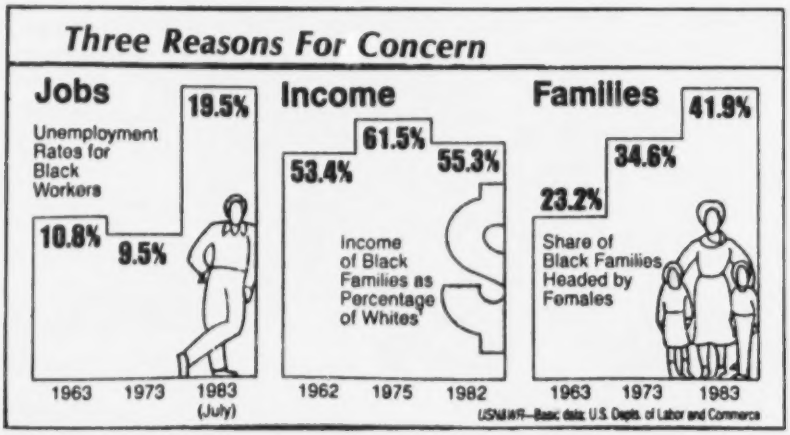
Twenty years after the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. excited the nation by describing his dream of racial equality, the civil rights movement is trying to recapture its old spirit to meet the new challenges of the 1980s.

When Dr. King gave his speech before 250,000 people gathered near the Lincoln Memorial, his words reached every corner of the United States. Issues then were clear: Blacks were being denied basic American rights in voting, housing and public accommodations.

Two decades later, Dr. King's followers point to many changes, for example:

- Laws against discrimination in voting, housing and employment are now on the books.
- The number of Black elected officials has risen from 500 to 5,100, with Black mayors in many large cities.
- Blacks in higher education have doubled in a decade, and the median number of school years completed by Blacks is now 12.2, up from 8. in 1960--almost the same as for whites.
- Incomes of young Black married couples have risen to nearly 90% of those of whites in the same age group, according to new census figures.

Such signs of progress have given civil rights leaders hope, but other issues have emerged. Many involve economics. The following chart suggests some of these concerns:



To deal with these issues of the 1980s, civil rights groups are mapping new strategies--strategies that are much more advanced than the sit-ins, freedom rides and other tactics of the 1960s.

One strategy being proposed: running a Black for president in the Democratic primaries next year. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, president of Operation PUSH, is the likely candidate. He declares that such a candidacy would boost the influence of minorities and show that Blacks can't be taken for granted.

Political power has in fact become a prime issue for nearly every civil rights group. Encouraged by Black successes this year in mayoral races in Chicago and Philadelphia, on August 14 the NAACP kicked off a voter registration drive with a target of 1.5 million new Black voters next year.

With Blacks still at the bottom of the income ladder, economic concerns get as much attention as politics. Civil rights groups are negotiating with firms for more minority jobs and promotions. Agreements have been reached with companies such as MGM studios, American Gas, Coca Cola and Seven-Up, among others.

Education is another priority. Arguing that standardized tests are biased against Blacks, the NAACP has started clinics to teach Black children how to take tests. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference has a campaign to save Black colleges.

The Urban League has launched programs aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy, which would in turn reduce the growth of the number of families headed by females--most of them stuck in poverty. A new Census Bureau report shows that while Black married couples registered a 6.9 percent gain in real median income from 1971 to 1981, the median income of Black families headed by women fell 8.3 percent.

The use of these new strategies is the result of what civil rights groups have learned over the past 20 years. As John Jacob of the Urban League puts it: "Atlanta was like another country 20 years ago. In Birmingham, white men were bombing Black churches with little kids in them. Now, both those cities have Black mayors leading them and making a difference. What Blacks have learned is that we may not have money, but we do have clout."

Jeannye Thornton, "King's Dream: How It Stands 20 Years Later," *U.S. News & World Report*, 29 August 1983.

EXERCISE 1

In column 1 below, list three concerns that Black Americans had in 1963. In column 2, list three changes in the situation of Blacks that had occurred by 1983, and in column 3, list three current concerns of Black Americans.

| (1) | (2) BLACK AMERICANS | (3) |
|---|---|---|
| THEIR CONCERNS IN 1963 | CHANGES IN THEIR SITUATION THAT OCCURRED BY 1983 | THEIR CONCERNS TODAY |
| a. | | |
| b. | | |
| c. | | |

EXERCISE 2

List below three strategies being used by civil rights groups today to deal with the concerns of Blacks in the 1980s.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____